Mission and Vision Statements
To end violence, inspire hope and provide unwavering support to all people affected by domestic and sexual violence by engaging our community in safety, equality and partnership.

Embrace envisions a courageous social change taking place ending all forms of oppression and violence and creating healthy communities where every person has the support to thrive.

WE SERVED:
614 men, women, teens and kids with domestic and sexual violence counseling and advocacy outreach services - a 76% increase when compared to 2015’s services.

26 women, 12 youth and 1 male with 2,123 nights of safe shelter, counseling and advocacy services.

407 sexual assault survivors served
184 served in Rusk; 110 in Price; 113 in Washburn - a 84% increase compared to 2015

7,759 individual counseling and advocacy contacts made with domestic and sexual violence survivors

20 victims received medical advocacy services including 5 sexual assault victims who received forensic nurse exam accompaniment

626 Crisis Calls
165 sexual assault calls; 475 domestic violence calls

Texting Hotline
40+ crisis texts received; used multiple times a day alongside social media to stay in contact with current clients.

463 Safe Exchanges completed at the shelter
144 completed in 2015
413 adult group counseling contacts made with domestic violence survivors through twice weekly shelter groups

A 5-week education series on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) conducted with elementary school teachers

Emergency Legal Advocacy & Criminal Justice Support
310 domestic and sexual violence survivors served

Tri-County domestic violence outreach and awareness work at an all-time high; 174 community outreach and education presentations, 288 youth outreach and education presentations, 53 public awareness events

Sexual Assault Prevention student and community presentations offered to all three counties reaching 17,000+ people

1,148 middle and high school student group contacts made across the tri-county service area on violence prevention and resiliency topics
NEW grants secured to fund programming
- Victims of Crime Act Competitive Increase
- Growing Roots

NEW Youth Development Advocate position created to support growth

Staff recruitment and retention goals accomplished
- Staff increased from 10 FTE to 14 FTE
- $10K Flexible Spending Account Benefit and Health insurance created for all full and part-time employees
- Increased wages with $104,612 by the end of 2016
- Paid sick, personal and vacation time offered to all employees

"I cannot say enough complementary words to describe what ... everyone has accomplished with... Embrace!"
--Karen Moore, SAVS Grants Specialist

COLLABORATION & SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

Embrace acknowledges the cycle of domestic and sexual violence will not end without taking a proactive approach with the community’s children and teens. We need to giving them the tools to heal and the knowledge to prevent the cycle from continuing. To do this, Embrace has prioritized tapping into collective roles with local schools to develop joint solutions supporting parents that will lead toward social change.

In 2016, Embrace had an interactive and ongoing presence in all 10 public school districts. Staff supported male and female students with on-site counseling, “Coaching Boys into Men” prevention and empathy-building program alongside football coaches, self-esteem support groups, therapeutic activities, prevention education sessions to classrooms, and outreach and awareness of the violence to families.

Embrace staff also regularly partner with teachers and principals to offer training to school staff on creating a trauma-sensitive environment, providing trauma-informed support to students, and understanding how trauma affects a child’s brain development, behaviors and their long-term wellness as an adult (ACEs).

In addition to the regular support groups and life skills groups hosted at the Rusk County Office, Embrace has added an additional option for support for victims in the form of the Turning Points group. The group has been taking place in the Price and Washburn County Jails, as well as the Rusk County Shelter.

The Turning Points Program is specifically designed for women who have used violence in relationships as a response to the abuse they have experienced in their lives. The goal of the program is to help women understand and make connections between the violence they experience, and the violence they use, and to ultimately eliminate both from their lives.

Through use of videos, workbooks, and generous amounts of discussion, the women are given the opportunity to hear and learn from other women who also know the challenges associated with experiencing abuse and how that can manifest itself later in a person’s life. With well-being and safety being top priorities for Embrace, Turning Points serves the function of helping to provide strategies for achieving both of those.
TIC trainers. counselors, white bison alternative healing, ACE trainers, historically underrepresented populations coming to cultural competency to better serve the large and barrier-laden communities as well as enhance staff’s addressing the intricate and complex needs of the
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Embrace has spent considerable effort attracting, interviewing and hiring great employees who are committed to being a part of the organization for the long-haul. Over the past few years, Embrace’s staff have demonstrated their commitment to the communities, collaborative services are improving exponentially, and victim services cannot afford to take a step back and lose its current respected and qualified staff. In 2016, staff identify and have continued staff development as absolutely necessary key factors in growing with the organization. To retain the professional staff, Embrace requested and received funding to support a significant staff development plan for the next three years.

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Law Enforcement

Embrace and our law enforcement partners are so accustomed to seeing survivors’ minimal viable options for escaping and healing from the violence. Rusk and Washburn County’s rural geography, expansive poverty, few social service agencies and high rates of domestic and sexual violence make the climb out of lifestyles of violence and poverty nearly impossible. In order to properly respond to survivors coming forward to law enforcement and help them to thrive within the unique poverty and social barriers in our small, rural communities, local law enforcement and Embrace knew it was critical to take the opportunity to enhance collaborative efforts with Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) connecting the few available resources and preventing homicide and future violence.

The strong partnerships we have with law enforcement and the collaboration in creating the domestic violence incident investigation packets law enforcement departments use laid a solid foundation for Embrace to add the evidence-based, homicide-prevention tool called the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) into our collaborative response practices. LAP is a user-friendly, evidence-based instrument for law enforcement to identify victims of intimate partner violence who are at risk of being murdered and encourage them to utilize Embrace’s services. Evidence shows victims are more likely to have less violence in their lives if they connect with services.

All Program Coordinators and Law Enforcement leaders were trained as trainers in September 2016. In early 2017, law enforcement and Embrace finished our internal department trainings—Embrace was invited to co-present with Washburn agencies and joined Rusk County Departments. Policies and Orders were developed and implemented in the departments. Washburn County went live February 1st and Rusk County went live March 1st. We are the third group in the state of Wisconsin to have implemented this innovative homicide prevention tool.

In spring 2016, TimeOut Family Abuse Shelter, Inc. changed its name to Embrace and adopted a new tag line of (People. Change. Equality.). The name Embrace better reflects the organization’s mission of providing unwavering support to all people affected by domestic and sexual violence and nurturing a social change in our communities that will end all forms of oppression. An updated logo for the organization was also released.

“It’s a positive word and you connect with its meaning immediately. We all felt that this word covered exactly what the organization does. We embrace people, and we embrace change,” said Embrace Vice-President Kelly Swan. “The board voted unanimously for Embrace,” explained Swan.

In the past two years, Embrace’s service numbers and collaborative partnerships have sky-rocketed; programming has doubled, and the organization is now going up stream prioritizing prevention efforts to end the violence for future generations. The name change to Embrace is the cherry on top of all of the accomplishments and represents the shift in the program’s philosophy.

To get the word out about the new name, Embrace completed an outreach and media campaign where new materials were distributed widely throughout the service area. As part of the campaign, open houses were held in the Washburn, Rusk and Price Counties’ local offices to celebrate.

In 2016, Embrace and local faith leaders were selected from a pool of national applicants to participate in a workshop led by speakers from Boston’s Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence, a non-sectarian nonprofit that works to bring together survivor advocacy and communities of all religious faiths. At the workshop hosted by Embrace, more than 30 local faith community leaders from Price, Rusk and Washburn Counties gathered for an all-day event at which leaders asked themselves how they could do more to end sexual and domestic violence and how they could better serve those who turn to them in an hour of need.

Research shows that survivors are more likely to turn to their faith leaders than they are to call the police or call Embrace. Yet few seminars teach faith leaders how to be first responders and work with trauma victims and that lack of training can prove dangerous for those who turn to them. Together at the workshop, Embrace and local faith leaders were trained as first responders to survivors coming forward in a faith-based setting as well as how to listen and identify carefully guarded clues that alert an experienced listener than an individual could be suffering abuse. The workshop strengthened referrals to Embrace from local faith leaders and opened doors to collaborative outreach and violence prevention presentations to faith and youth groups throughout the rural service area. As a result of the collaboration, our communities’ faith leaders now have the tools to support survivors and are willing to raise their voices condemning domestic and sexual violence in their faith community. Lives will be saved and our wider communities will become a safer place from the collaborative efforts of Embrace and faith leaders.

Faith Communities

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Faith Communities
Board of Directors
Marlene Tuma - President, Kelly Swan - Vice President, Dave Willingham - Treasurer, Susie Daniels - Secretary, Kathy Mai - Personnel Chair, Jeff Wallace, Theresa Gibbs, Kevin Julien, John Kmosena, Annette Barna, Dave Wilson, Mike Toycen, Chris Jarosinski

Staff
Katie Bement, Becky Steinbach, Angela Kleinhans, Brittny Olson, Ashley Grant, Natalie LaPointe, Cassandra Clark, Alyssa Melin, Robyn Wiemer, Heidi Harland, Ashley Kuprin, Deb Sewilo, Amanda Camren, Kyann Leisner, DeNae Bube, Georgette Bembenek, Chris Mortenson, Kendra Taber

50 volunteers and interns donated over 1220 hours to the organization.

We are committed to end violence in all relationships and will continue to collaborate with your agency to better ensure safe environments for all. ... I want to keep the current staff and leadership intact. ... No organization is good just because they say they are, you have one if you have dedicated, workable and intelligent staff and leadership. I want to make sure [staff] feel recognized/appreciated for your awesome work so ya’ll stick around and continue with the good relationships and programming.” - Jim LeDuc, Washburn County Health and Human Services Director

“I loved touring Embrace and feeling empowered and inspired by the women working there.” - WI Express Nursing Student from UW-Madison